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ABSTRACT

Forty documents addressing quality issues in the education of older adults were reviewed. The articles, papers, and books, all of which were published in Great Britain or the United States between 1983 and 1985, were examined to obtain answers to the following questions: (1) What kind of terminology is used to describe the specific learner population and does the terminology used make a difference? (2) What is known about educator training and attitudes that affects the education of older adults? (3) Is there any consensus regarding education provided on an age-integrated, age-segregated, or intergenerational basis? and (4) How (and to what extent) does the literature reflect on the questions of access and equity in the education of older adults? Although the literature indicated a considerable variety in the terminology used, there was little reflection of the problems inherent in language usage. Evidence was found indicating that sterotypical attitudes and myths about the aging process and its effect on the learning process and on making a contribution in society do exist among providers of adult education and that these need to be counteracted. It appeared that equal claims can be made for the benefits of age-integrated, age-segregated, and intergenerational educational settings. The literature contained very little, however, about the issues of access and equity in education for older adults. Forty references are appended. (Author/MN)

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Some Quality Issues Regarding Education with the Older Adult: A Review of Literature during 1983-85

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May 1986

Abstract: The purpose of this literature review is to consider how certain issues of quality are addressed in adult education literature specifically related to the older adult. The wealth of research and descriptive material concerning older adults in education in the U.S. and in other countries is increasing. In what ways does this literature of the past three years reflect on these questions of quality:

(1) What kind of terminology is used to describe the specific learner population and does it make a difference?
(2) What is known about educator (or provider) training and attitudes that affects education with this learner population?
(3) Is there any consensus regarding education which is provided on an age-integrated, age-segregated basis, or intergenerational basis?
(4) How (and to what extent) does this literature reflect on the questions of access and equity in older adult education?

Forty articles, papers or books were reviewed for this paper, all of which were published in the United States or Great Britain in 1983, 1984 and 1985. The review shows: that there is considerable variety in the terminology used and little reflection of problems inherent in language usage; that stereotypical attitudes and myths about the aging process and its affect on learning and contributing in society must be counteracted amongst providers of older adult education; that equal claims for benefits of age-integrated, age-segregated and intergenerational educational settings can be made; and that the literature says very, very little about important questions of access and equity in education with older adults.

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There is no question that by sheer number alone the impact of older adults in U.S. society is increasing. In 1900 three percent of the US population was over 60 years of age; by the year 2035 it is estimated that 25% will be over 60 years (McDaniel, 1984) or 29.6% over 65 years of age (Snider and Houser, 1983). The numbers of older adults engaged in education also is increasing.

This review of literature does not look at quantitative aspects about the numbers of older adults engaged in a wide variety of educational settings. It does not look at whether older adults can learn, what their level of cognitive ability is or how well they score on various intelligence tests. It assumes that the amount and variety of older adult education programs is increasing and that program planning involves numerous assessments of need and want among older adults.

The literature reviewed assumes both the importance of and existence of older adult education. The point of this literature review is to look at the concern for quality in providing for education during the later years of the lifespan. Because quality questions have been raised about education with older adults prior to the 1971 White House Conference on Aging (Peterson, 1983), this writer decided to review the literature of the most recent three years to study the extent and nature of some quality questions.

A manual search was conducted of ERIC index and abstracts for 1983-85 using the descriptors "adult education", "older adults", and "children and aging". A search of the Education Index for 1983-85 also used the same descriptors. All 39 pieces

of literature found in this search process were reviewed, excepting an article in the Agriculture Education Journal, which was not accessible to the reviewer under present time constraints. One book is included in the review (Peterson, 1983); it was published in early 1983 and is given reference as an important general resource by other authors reviewed (Johnston and Phillipson, 1983; Fisher, 1983; et.al.).

This literature was reviewed on the basis of four themes which affect the purpose, process, content and audience in older adult education. These themes are continuing issues in almost all adult education, regardless of age, but regarding education with persons in later parts of the lifespan they take on particular importance. The themes are:

(1) the terminology used to describe the particular learners concerned and implications of that use;

(2) the preparation of persons who work educationally with older adults, including consideration of the educators' attitudes toward the learners;

(3) the validity of age-segregated, age-integrated or intergenerational educational settings with older adults; and

(4) the degree to which questions of access and equity are illuminated in literature regarding older adult education, including matters of race/ethnicity, gender, social and economic class and geography.

Much of the literature included in this review actually described programs or research in needs assessment, rather than primarily observations or research in the specific themes

addressed. Comments related to the four themes were sometimes mentioned as by-products of research which was intended to show other factors. Literature which was purely descriptive of programs/program planning or needs assessment was not included in this review, even for drawing inferences. In this respect one should recognize from the outset that the themes are not matters for frequent treatment in the literature of the past three years, although much more is said about preparation of teachers and about age-integration/segregation themes than the other two themes.

Use of Terminology

Soon after the writer started reading the literature the issue loomed of terminology used in reference to the learner who is an older adult. While an exhaustive tally in all the literature was not kept, it was startling to note that one 11-page article used 7 different terms (Robinson, 1983), each without qualification and seemingly equally.

Most authors who defined their terminology used a chronological definition, sometimes with descriptive qualification. Peterson (1983) defined "older people" as 55-plus, unless younger persons experienced difficulty caused by age-related factors. Thomas (1985) defined "older adults" as those in the latter part of their lifespan, but recognized that differences in this definition exist among individuals and among different countries. Other chronological definitions were made by authors primarily according to the individuals involved in a particular study (Conter, 1983; DeJong, 1983; Hausafus, Ralston and DeLanoit,

1985; Hedge, 1984; Nelson, 1983; Owsley, 1983; Wolf, 1985; Zdenek, 1984).

Terms used most frequently in this literature were: older adults (17 authors), elderly (11 authors), older people (8 authors), older learner (7 authors). Terms used by one to three authors were: old age, older citizens, the aging, old people, older generation, the elder, seniors, senior citizen, retired, aging adult learners.

Most authors reviewed did not discuss the social consequences or implications of terminology used to define the older adult audience. Only Kalab (1985) addresses this issue directly, noting that placing names on objects implies ways of acting toward the objects, including thinking about and behaving toward. Is it possible to talk about people who are 65 years and older without using terms which carry negative implications? Kalab cites a 1978 poll by the National Council on Aging which indicates that older people prefer terms such as "senior citizen", "mature American", or "retired person," when a single choice must be made, although there is no unanimity for any one of these terms. It is clear that older people do not want to be known as "old man", "old woman", "aged person", "old timer", "golden ager" (Kalab). Introductory sociology and social gerontology textbooks use different terms. Kalab's study of introductory sociology and gerontology textbooks reveals that these two fields of social science use different terms. While both used "old peole", social gerontology books used the term of choice, "senior citizen," more frequently. Some sociology and more gerontology texts discussed difficulty in finding suitable terminology.

As Kalab notes, contrary to other discrimination and systematized social prejudices displayed in attitude and behavior, (based on race, gender or class), one does not experience "ageism" until one is old.' Kalab quotes A. Comfort's pungent statement: "...on reaching old age we may be prejudiced against ourselves." This factor will be noted in the next section.

Attitudes and Preparation of Educators

The reviewer was surprised by the extent and ramifications of the literature which considers the attitudes of and preparation of educators. In some cases this matter could not be separated from attitudes held by the older adult learners themselves because of the interrelatedness of attitudes of educator and educatee. While it is not easy to separate some of this material into different categories, three different areas of concern are suggested: (1) what do educators need to know? (2) what about the attitude of the educator? and (3) what in this area of concern are matters for educators to constantly explore?

The reviewer uses the term "educator" to include planners (and administrators), practitioners and instructors of educators working with older adults, whether full-time or part-time.

What do educators need to know?

The reviewer identified ten areas in the related literature suggesting what the educator needs to know.

1. Older adult learners constitute a heterogenous population group. Peterson (1983) describes the wide variances evident among "older adults". Robinson (1983) says that it is important

to respond to diversity in the population, not only to improve one's teaching but to increase and encourage older adults' participation in education. Thomas (1985) says that differences among individuals become greater as they grow older, that educators should recognize wider differences among a group of older adults in a teaching situation than one would see in a group of people in a primary or secondary school class. She stresses one significant learning for educators with older adults: to remember the qualifying word, "some".

2. The effective educator with older adults will be familiar with the social and economic histories of the older adults, including variations according to age cohorts amongst older persons. For Battersby (1985) this is important as context for planning varieties of education for varieties of groups. Robinson (1983) and Peterson (1983) suggest that the educator should know the birth cohort of participants in order to draw on or relate current education to their experience. Wolf (1984), Bornat (1983a) and Johnston (1983) describe the positive values of the method of life recall or reminiscence with older adults in various settings. To use this method effectively requires familiarity with the cohort life experience.

3. There is extensive and new data about lifespan development, particularly in later life. Peterson (1983) describes this material at length: physical, emotional/psychological, relational and intelligence development. Some earlier data about learning abilities are being challenged by changing perspectives and questions about research methodology. For example, the older adult's

fear of intellectual decline may account for lower test scores, rather than actual decline in ability (Wolf, 1985). Coates (1984) tells music educators to recognize that personal growth continues into maturity. Nelson's (1983) study of service providers of older adult education in rural communities showed that, contrary to other studies, these providers had a good knowledge of physical lifespan development of older adults. (These service providers were professionals, volunteers, clerical workers in service agencies and para-professionals.) Nelson posits that this may be due to good in-service training for many service providers, but he also wonders if there is a gap between knowledge and practice based on these data.

4. Several authors testified (directly or indirectly) to the importance of educators' recognizing and developing meaningful activity with older adults (Coates, 1984; Peterson, 1983). This was graphically illustrated by authors who work with language learning: Rigg and Kazemek (1983) in literacy education, Hedge (1984) in teaching Spanish, and Zdenek (1984) in teaching English as a second language.

5. Educators need to recognize the value of evaluation given by the older adult of educational experiences. It is the learner who must do the principal evaluation (Coates, 1984). The older adult will be critical and evaluative of the quality of educational programming. Educators must seek out this information (Owsley, 1983).

6. The classroom/educational environment for older adult learners is of particular importance. Peterson (1983) describes several aspects of this concern in some detail. The literature

reviewed usually focused on both physical environmental factors and affective factors to enhance the learning environment (Hedge, 1984; Ostwald and Williams, 1985). Concrete suggestions to improve the learning environment are given by Peterson, (1983) Snider and Houser, (1983) and Hedge (1984).

7. Almost all authors spoke of the importance of building on the learners' life experience and background knowledge, recognizing that information and perspectives divergent from this experience may be resisted unless specifically accounted for.

8. Significant attention is given by authors to educators' need to know and apply principles of andragogical education. Borthwick (1983), Robinson (1983), Peterson (1983), Battersby (1985), Landerholm and Nelson (1985), McDaniel (1984), and Zdenek (1984) specifically mention this need in educational training; several say that the characteristics of older adults require the application of andragogy. As described by Peterson (1983), these principles and practices include: (a) the use of self-direction by learners to affect content and process; (b) the use of the older adult's experience plays a role in the type and extent of learning achieved; (3) the individual's stage of development affects the choice of content and skills used; (4) older adults look for problem-centered learning ("meaningful" learning); and (5) older adults are motivated more by internal incentives than extrinsic rewards. Borthwick (1983) suggests that beliefs and attitudes will differ between educators who are andragogically or pedagogically oriented.

Owsley's (1983) teachers of older adults in rural Wyoming

received special training, including a "Ten Tips" sheet for teachers to use in preparing their class instructional design, incorporating the above principles.

Because the principles of andragogy are so important but not yet thought through or effectively applied with older adult learners, some writers have suggested that "gerogogy"--principles for teaching older adults--must be developed by educators. (Peterson, 1983; Battersby, 1985; Borthwick, 1983). One author suggests development of "eldergogy" so that both education and aging are reconceptualized (McDaniel, 1984).

9. Many authors spoke of the educators' need to know and deal with the various barriers to participation in education by older adults. Peterson (1983), Robinson (1983), and Ostwald and Williams (1985) describe barriers as physical, situational and institutional. But they each focus, also, on the negative impact on educators who persistently consider older adult education primarily from the standpoint of "barriers". They identify negative attitudes held by educators as an important barrier, without minimizing the other barriers which limit participation.

10. The educator with older adults needs to recognize differences from other educational settings regarding his/her role with the learners. Ostwald and Williams (1985) give four roles of educators: to promote the autonomy of the older learner; to minimize effects of internal affective learning; to eliminate external barriers to learning; and to facilitate learning by activating the resources available to the educator. Owsley's (1983) program considered the role of the educator to be very important and observed that instructors could

be of any age, but they had to be courteous, knowledgeable and "lively". The instructors had to design all courses specifically with the elderly in mind.

Educators' Attitudes Toward the Older Adult as Learner

For many of the authors reviewed, the "need to know" factors described above for educators working with older adults are almost secondary to dealing with negative and "ageist" attitudes toward the older adult in U.S. society. Conter (1983), Coates (1984), Nelson (1983), Peterson (1983), Snider and Houser (1983), Wolf (1983, 1984) and Bornat (1983b) all speak of the importance of the educator having a positive attitude toward the contributive resources of older adults. This means recognizing that most societal attitudes toward older persons are negative.

The service provider's view of older adults and perceptions of their needs is crucial in program development (Nelson, 1983). Appreciating and using the life review processes of the older adult as a means for coping with the past, present and future is educationally important for growth, not just an indulgence in memory (Wolf, 1983; Johnston, 1983). The world of the older adult is the "ultimate" in informational resources (Wolf, 1984).

Dealing with negative societal attitudes held by educators with older adults raises the question of what is "useful" education. Coates (1984) describes the need for counteracting negative societal views by enhancing ageless values, such as music. When education enhances such an ageless value the culture of the older adult is affirmed, given symbolism and meaning. Ostwald

and Williams (1985) cite the negative attitudes of educators and society toward elders who won't be applying new learnings in the marketplace. Peterson (1983) develops the numerous possibilities for education with the older worker, but spends several pages writing about the myths and stereotypes pervading this stream of adult education which perpetuate society's negative attitude towards older persons.

Owsley (1983), Rogovin (1983), and Timmermann (1985) claim that adult educators can help turn around the negative societal attitudes and behavior against older adulthood. Owsley (1983) says that educators need to do more work on ageism and the myths of aging in the locality, not just provide educational opportunities for older adults. Timmermann (1985) asks for educators to seek to develop the more positive attitudes and information with all levels of education; Rogovin (1983) says that preschool educators may be the most receptive group to this and that they work with a crucial age group influential to long term change from patterns of ageism.

The consequence of this negativism towards older adults by society and by too many educators, say Wolf (1985) and Snider and Houser (1983), is that the older adults themselves internalize this ageism and respond out of that context. Older persons themselves may say they are unable to learn, or can't remember, or respond in dependent patterns. Snider and Houser call for education with older adults to break the "failure model" and images of total decline in old age.

One method for counteracting these dependency models is to involve older adults from early on in all phases of educational

planning and implementation. The planning model for establishing a graduate program used by University of Southern Maine included the involvement of a community advisory group of older persons. This group's involvement led to new recognition by the program's organizers of how important such educational approaches could be in effecting community understanding, in forming changed attitudes of the young toward aging, among other outcomes of this process (Callender, 1984). If older adults are engaged in the actual program planning for literacy instruction, Rigg and Kazemek (1983) say they can turn away from the "diminished view" of themselves, and think of themselves as readers and writers, in other words, they can create meaning in life. Both McDonald (1984) and Timmermann (1985) identify peer teaching/peer counselling as educational methods which can affect more positive attitudes by learners of themselves and their life roles in older adulthood.

What Do Teachers Need to Constantly Explore?

Several continuing issues are cited by authors regarding teacher education and teacher attitudes with older adults. One issue is the question of philosophy, purpose, aims and goals of education with older adults. McDaniel (1984) asks for a commitment by educators in all service agencies to analyze goals for educating the aging. Battersby (1985) asks if educators have a clear idea of why older adults should be educated. He notes an absence of philosophical reflection in older adult education.

Battersby (1985), Peterson (1983), Rigg and Kazemek (1983),

Walker (1983), and Timmermann (1985), using somewhat slightly different language, criticize as too-prevalent a characteristic of older adult education which breeds dependency rather than independence or self-sufficiency. For Peterson (1983) this represents a social service orientation, concentrating on activities rather than problem-solving. Rigg and Kazemek (1983) identify the problem in literacy education as one where educators assume incompetence and inadequacy, conditions which need to be "fixed up" by professionals. Battersby (1985) challenges the middle-class notions of education which perpetuate a "medicinal image" of education for older people. He cites McClusky's writing as illustrative of this image, where the elderly have coping, expressive, contributive and influential needs, all of which can and should be remedied by educational programs. Walker (1983) develops a case for older adult education, particularly in institutional care situations, based on a psycho-social model of development, not a medical-therapeutic model. Timmermann (1985) suggests that the goal of older adult education should be that of self-sufficiency, self-help, self-reliance, coupled with social responsibility, concentrating on economic self-sufficiency, practical life skills, community contribution and the possibilities of becoming a fuller human being.

The continuing question of the educator's own attitudes toward older adults and the conditions of aging must be addressed. Thomas (1985) cites the experience of a seminar for workers with older adults, titled, "Is Your Attitude Showing?", saying that it brought out the often unconsciously patronizing attitude of some educators.

The planning process at the University of Southern Maine for graduate study in older adult education (educational gerontology) helped all participants come to see themselves as aging adult learners. Thus, the content was real and not just planning for the purpose of reproducing something for the benefit of someone else. The faculty and others involved became aware that "...many of the problems of being old have to do with being treated as old, and stereotyped into a mythical group, deserving of retirement, needing control, and being treated as generally dependent" (Callender, 1984).

The importance of seeing older adult education as not "doing for", but, rather, "doing with" was raised by several authors (Thomas, 1985). Philibert (1983) seeks to have teachers make older adults partners, not objects of scientific research in the search for meaning in life. He states that much adult education sees older adults as objects and consumers instead of valuing the older adult perspective as an instrument and process for interpretation about people themselves and their world.

Phillipson (1983a) raises this problem by challenging education which treats older persons as "disadvantaged". He asserts the importance for educators to seek full involvement of older persons in addressing the quality and design of their educational experiences, and to develop their opportunities for continuing education in their work (before retirement) and elsewhere. Attention to these factors helps educators overcome ideas of older persons as disadvantaged.

Another continuing issue for educators of older adults treated in this material is the extent to which the examination of this subject leads to broad questions about all of education and the social context of education (Gayfer, 1985). Zdenek (1984) questions whether doing an intensive short-term Spanish course for older adults doesn't make one question the validity of the usual content and methods of ordinary high school or college language classes, such as whether one teaches by a text. Callender (1984) noted the university's surprise in discovering that the Summer Institute experience itself was an important part of learning in setting up the educational gerontology program. Its content and process also challenged the traditional classroom setting for other courses in the university; people wanted that experience replicated in the usual college class and not just in a special summer institute.

Age-Integrated or Age-Segregated Settings?

The problem of definition of terms pertains a bit to usage of the words age-integrated or age-segregated or intergenerational. One author's study used "intergenerational" in reference to different generations of adults together (DeJong, 1983), while another used it in reference to older adults in college classrooms with college students of more typical age (Wolf, 1985). Others (Landerholm and Nelson, 1985; Peterson, 1983; Rogovin, 1983; Thomas, 1985) implied that "intergenerational" meant children/youth with older adults. Borthwick (1983) cites the usefulness of intergenerational program formats, but he does not

amplify this statement at all.

Studies by DeJong (1983) and Wolf (1985) claim that the intergenerational classroom or educational experience was desired by a majority of the older adults for reasons of stimulation from the younger adults in the learning process, with Wolf (1985) noting that younger students would seek out older learners for counsel. Wolf also indicates that the provision of reduced tuition in college classrooms for older adults may create a structural problem for the older adult who feels self-conscious about "taking the professor's time" from the full-tuition paying, credit-receiving younger student. (How ironic: by reducing one problem of access, a problem in status perception is created.)

The possibilities of intergenerational educational settings between children and older adults are significant for several reasons. Important interactions between young and elderly can enable young children to change attitudes toward old age. Preschool educators are also receptive to innovation as well as to persons (Rogovin, 1983).

Intergenerational learning should be fostered by adult educators as a means of educating the public about lifelong learning and to educate about older adults and the process of aging (Thomas, 1985). Specific cautions are given about intergenerational programs. They must encourage young and old to work together and to work on projects necessary to both ages, rather than "children helping old folks" (Gamble, 1983). Peterson (1983) calls for the method and content to serve needs of all ages involved, wanting older adults to be both teachers and

learners. He notes that Howard McClusky argued for different age groups to teach each other.

In the specific case of Hispanic older adults being trained in childcare work, Landerholm and Nelson (1985) say that this relationship has considerable value in helping the young children develop knowledge about their ethnic historical roots and pride in their ethnicity. The older adults had to learn about young children's learning processes, especially to value process over product with the preschoolers. They note further that the provision of an intergenerational staff in the daycare setting provided benefits not only to the children but to the families of these children.

In order to provide good intergenerational programs, Peterson (1983) says that much accommodation will be required of educational institutions, particularly in regards to conceptualization of content and process, location factors, and expectations of all learners.

Peterson (1983) described several questions to be raised about age-segregated education, particularly noting that age segregation may lead to the older adult's disengagement from important roles and relationships. He states that age-segregated education is more common than intergenerational, but important questions of quality persist for these programs. Who, he asks, is caring for the development of these programs so that they do not lead to disengagement nor lead to ignoring the particular needs of older adults? Peterson cites the Elderhostel program example, which involves increasing numbers of older adults each year in college classrooms for one week or longer. This is an

age-segregated program, (for those 55 years or older), but the Elderhostel program allows no course content on aging. For Peterson this situation poses a potentially serious question about whether Elderhostel helps its participants face realities of older adulthood with requisite abilities.

Stock (1983) says that British adult education professionals probably prefer "all-age" programs, but cites three areas identified by Tyler which are enhanced by age-segregated educational settings. These are: (1) subject areas referring to roles and role needs; (2) subjects which need to be taught in a particular way because of observable decline in physical abilities of specific elderly groups; and (3) when there is a clear educational case for doing so, such as providing for people living in a nursing home.

A further point made by Stock (1983) is that age-integrated and age-segregated education can coexist healthily, because opportunities are generally so inadequate for older adults. No author reviewed made any case for exclusive attention to either age-integrated or age-segregated. In fact, the majority of authors reviewed did not treat the subject. A strong case was made by Gayfer (1985) for educators to see the positive value in age-segregated activities which foster older adults' advocacy for attention to their needs and priorities in all aspects of society. She states that advocacy by and for the elderly does not deny the goal of an age-integrated society nor the importance of other social issues. The purpose of such advocacy is to get the message to policy makers and other age groups that policies and

strategies identified now for the future will benefit everyone.

Questions of Access and Equity in Older Adult Education

There are many general issues addressed in the literature about the access of older adults to the wide variety of adult educational offerings. The most prominent one is simply to consider the extent to which older adults in general engage in adult education. Peterson (1983) cites statistics which show that generally this is an underserved group. Peterson (1983), Borthwick (1983) and Robinson (1983) attribute this situation to a wide range of barriers -- situational, institutional, physical -- which apply particularly to older adults, although they apply in some ways to adult education in general. These authors indicate that only scattered efforts are made to overcome these barriers specifically for older adults, and that these barriers are not well understood. They believe the barriers can be overcome. These same authors encourage a positive push to address such barriers on behalf of older adults, but moreover, they wwant a positive push to address the need for and the possibilities offered by education with older adults in general.

A more important and prevailing theme in the literature reviewed related to access questions is the frequent appeal to recognize that the older adult population is not homogeneous. Battersby (1985), Peterson (1983), Phillipson (1983b), Robinson (1983), Thomas (1985), Johnston and Phillipson (1983) comment specifically on this topic; many others refer to or imply the importance of this understanding. (See the earlier section on

attitudes and preparation of educators.) The writers appeal for educators to note specificities in description of older adult audience, particularly in needs assessment and program planning for particular segments of this population, and they call for broadening or specializing educational offerings to demonstrate this understanding of heterogeneity.

Toward this end there is some discussion of the funding of education with older adults, recognizing that older adults are themselves a "targeted group" requiring special attention. Timmermann (1985) and Smith (1983) call for adult educators to develop long-term funding plans for this special population group, recognizing that this means educators must deal with the politics of funding systems influencing the types of programs which are "fundable." Timmermann cites the attitude of U.S. federal funding of programs with older adults as buying into the "we help them", rather than self-sufficiency model, wherein education funds go to service providers who tend to perpetuate dependency patterns, rather than directly to self-help groups of older adults. Timmermann argues for targeting the very limited resources available for older adult education to those most in need, not necessarily those who are most ready to participate, i.e., older adults who are poor, unemployed, minorities, displaced homemakers, in order to establish new patterns of the "typical participant" in older adult education.

Phillipson (1983a) and Peterson (1983) state that most older adult participants in educational efforts have a higher educational level and are "younger" older adults. This was confirmed in DeJong's (1983) limited study as well. Borthwick (1983) says

this information should lead educators to gear their programs for the "younger older" population. One consequence of the higher educational level represented among older adult participants in education versus other older adults is that the more highly educated know where opportunities are available and know what their interests are (Fisher, 1983). Peterson (1983) comments that demographic statistics show that with each decade in this century more and more persons achieved higher educational levels, so it is not surprising that "younger older" adults have more education and apparently are taking advantage of education in later life.

Fisher (1983) found a lower degree of anomie among participants with higher educational background. He relates this finding to a participant's sense of alienation or powerlessness, both about the specific educational content and the meaningfulness of the educational content to one's life.

According to Battersby (1985), if educators target older adults as a "disadvantaged group," the terminology itself will be alienating to persons affected, particularly if one experiences society to be oppressive for class, race or gender reasons. He says that the elderly working class or elderly women, for example, may view education this way, because it inherently represents a controlling process over their lives: if they are disadvantaged, someone else controls the advantages in life and will perhaps dole (some of) it out to them.

Another more general consideration regarding the access of older adult learners has to do with the potential impact of older

adults on educational institutions. Some of this has been mentioned earlier. Johnston and Phillipson (1983) clearly believe that the impact of older learners on institutions could cause a radical change in perspectives of those institutions--if they are willing to be permeated in these matters. The impact would affect course design, the running of courses, the application of participant´s experience, the question of examinations, vocational aspects, accepted roles of "teacher", "pupil", "client", patient","career", "volunteer", and "professional".

This literature was reviewed for its treatment of the distinctiveness of race, gender, social-economic class and geography in older adult education.

During the three years´ literature only five authors specifically referred to the race of program participants (DeJong, 1983; McDonald, 1984; Landerholm and Nelson, 1985; Hedge, 1984; Wolf, 1985). Only three of these articles (McDonald, 1984; Landerholm and Nelson, 1985; Hedge, 1984) dealt with the particular contributions and needs of ethnic minority older adults in educational settings. One may have to assume that participants spoken of "generically" in the literature are predominantly white, or that the authors did not think that this factor was important to break down in statistical compilations.

McDonald (1984), a social service provider and not primarily an adult educator, makes reference to the greater poverty which Blacks experience as compared to whites in the U.S. She asserts that the Black community, nonetheless, has a wealth of untapped social, economic and community resources within it for survival skills through its increasing numbers of older adults. In

outlining the possibilities for peer, family and community support services, educational opportunities are mentioned numerous times.

Landerholm and Nelson (1985) cite the positive impact which Hispanic older adults can have instilling ethnic pride and heritage with preschoolers as staff aides in a daycare setting. Working successfully with older adults in teaching English as a second language requires a respect for the learners' original language and culture (Hedge, 1984). Landerholm and Nelson (1985) and McDonald (1984) implicitly make the case for educators to recognize the special opportunities which may arise in adult education when working with ethnic populations in areas of ethnic need. Battersby (1985) mentions that ethnicity, while largely unexplored, does add to the diversity which adult educators must take into account.

Phillipson (1983b) describes sexist attitudes prevailing in most pre-retirement educational efforts in Britain, due to several factors. The primary one is the factor of not taking into account the considerable differences of experience and economics of male and female workers in the work force, including historical patterns. Also, women who have not been employed outside the home, whose spouses are retiring, have a very different set of needs at the time of retirement than does the worker. He briefly describes a course plan for women in pre-retirement education which takes these matters into account. It is very different from those described by Peterson (1983), who devotes considerable attention to pre-retirement education but does not address the

matter of gender differences and sexism in this form of older adult education.

As for equity issues in older adult education pertaining to one's economic class, only two authors (Battersby, 1985; Phillipson, 1983b) raised the distinctiveness which economic class orientation and experience may bring to course content. Phillipson indicates that pre-retirement education should be constructed differently for different economic class groups because of class-formed views of work and expectations in retirement. He challenges the notion that retirement is "the great economic leveller." While Peterson (1983) acknowledges some differences would exist between laborers and executives in approaching retirement, which should be accounted for largely by individual counselling about financial matters by one's employer or union, he feels most other retirement education could be handled in an economically composite grouping. Owsley (1983) asks for special awareness of the low income of older adults in many rural areas, but does not relate this awareness particularly to course content.

The literature showed some substantial research being done on the question of equity for the geographically isolated older adult, particularly the rural older adult. In Iowa 40% of the elderly are rural and there is extra difficulty in the education of elderly due to scarcity of resources, lack of existing educational systems, and attitudinal barriers of program planners (Hausafus, Ralston and DeLanoit, 1985).

Both the Iowa and Wyoming research studies of rural older adults (Hausafus, Ralston and DeLanoit, 1985; Owsley, 1983)

stress the importance in rural areas of collaboration and cooperation among existing learning, medical and other service and community agencies. Owsley suggests combining the collaborative effort with "a little imagination". (McDaniel, [1984] makes the point that a comprehensive and coordinated delivery system for educating the aging is necessary in all older adult education. Peterson [1983] stresses the need for a single, coordinated delivery system.)

Within the rural area adult educators also must be aware of possibilities for homebound and low income older adults (Owsley, 1983). Access to adult education by the rural older adult population will require the educator to consider a wide variety of options for delivery style and location, rather than just institutional settings (Nelson, 1983).

Another form of geographic isolation was considered by Coleman (1983), Owsley (1983), Walker (1983) and Johnston (1983): older adults who are homebound or living in institutions, particularly those in institutions who are not physically mobile. These authors described imaginative possibilities of older adult education programs with persons living in such geographic isolation. Essentially they were testifying to the fact that "it is possible".

Johnston (1983) described the use of slide-tape shows with elderly people with a mental infirmity to evoke recall and reminiscence. The use of such stimulus lets the elderly be "in charge" and helps bring the outside community closer, which would fit Timmermann's (1985) call for increasing self-sufficiency in older adult education. Coleman (1983) describes an outreach

program for volunteer tutors to go to homebound and institution-bound older adult, seeking to bring them out to other educational settings whenever possible.

Walker (1983) insists that the providers of institutional care should regard the institution itself as a learning environment capable of providing assistance to residents and patients over such matters as rehabilitation, continued personal development, preservation of independence and links with the community.

Concluding Discussion

A few concluding comments need to be made. Some comments are by way of reflection on the total material or particular themes. Some comments are on methodology, while one refers to future needs in research in this topic.

First, the methodology: by selecting chronological parameters as well as thematic parameters, there is some natural and perhaps artifical limitation to the database for this literature review. The reason for setting the chronological parameter was primarily the wealth of material available and the present time constraints for this project. It was also an attempt to see "what new" is being said on these quality issues. It is also evident to this reviewer that other databases, such as sociology and dissertation abstracts, might be searched with fruitful results.

Secondly, what about the literature base? The literature of other countries and international bodies (such as UNESCO) should be reviewed in the same chronological period for comparison and

illumination. Only the material from the United Kingdom (available through ERIC or U.S. journals) and the U.S. was included here. It became clear that the content and direction of material from the UK and in Convergence (International Journal of Adult Education) was very different from that of US authors and, consequently, very challenging to perspectives taken for granted in the U.S., particularly in regard to consciousness about gender and economic class.

Thirdly, there are three central and lingering, almost nagging concerns facing adult educators with older adults, which become points of advocacy for this reviewer.

(1) Terminology is important in this field of interest and program. It infers both attitude and behavior toward the older adult learner and by the older adult learner. Educators must listen to and continue learning about the nuances which language conveys. Educators must also learn to address their own attitudes of "ageism" inherent in terminology but also reflected in practice.

(2) The equity questions of gender, class, race and geography are very important for (some) adult educators to address with older adults. Will educators in institutions address these questions in program development and needs assessment, or will they be left to educators in less traditional, non-institutional settings (community organizations, churches, for example)?

(3) There is substantial challenge to adult educators to reflect on whether the content and process of what we do is based

on a philosophy of "providing for" versus "self-sufficiency" of the older adult learners. In other words, we must engage in continuing philosophical inquiry as to the purpose and consequences of older adult education.

Fourthly, it will be important for adult educators to engage in qualitative research in these matters with older adults. It seems presently to be insufficient. As one small example, one might review pre-retirement education literature for its consideration of equity issues, especially social-economic class expectations and differences, or regarding gender receptivity and participation.

The material is rich, showing considerable growth in understanding and data. There is room for continued debate, discussion and research on these qualitative issues in older adult education.

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